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AUTHOR	Creech, Joseph D.
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ABSTRACT

This publication reports on the extent and usefulness of information provided to high schools by colleges on the college readiness of freshmen attending college in states covered by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). The opening section notes the usefulness of college to school reporting, the importance of students arriving at college ready to do the work expected of them, and the difficulty of developing good information exchange efforts. The following section describes the current state of college to school reporting noting that the frequency and quality of the reporting varies greatly from institution to institution. It also notes that SREB states differ in the ways they gather and report information. The next section offers three examples that illustrate the differences in both the kinds of information provided in college-to-school reports and in the way states and institutions report information. The examples are Tennessee, North Carolina, and Louisiana which currently provide information about the college success of recent high school graduates. A final summary section suggests eight qualities of a successful college readiness reporting program. (JB)

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Readiness for College

COLLEGE-TO-SCHOOL REPORTING IN THE SREB STATES

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Readiness for College

COLLEGE-TO-SCHOOL REPORTING IN THE SREB STATES

Joseph D. Creech

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SREB

Southern Regional Education Board

BY THE YEAR 2000—

4 of every 5 students entering college will be ready to begin college level work.

". . .it is impossible to separate the question of the quality in a state's elementary and secondary schools and in its colleges."

Goals for Education
CHALLENGE 2000

Art Jones teaches mathematics at rural Sample Valley High School. A good number of his students earn admission to in-state colleges and universities each year. From time to time Art reads disturbing press reports about the large numbers of freshmen who arrive on college campuses in need of remedial work in mathematics. Depending on the state where Art Jones teaches, he may have no idea, some idea, or a very good idea of how well his own students meet college expectations–and whether his students are part of the remedial problem.

In some SREB states, teachers like Art Jones could take advantage of reports sent to every high school to learn details about the success of recent graduates on college placement tests and freshman coursework. In several states, Art Jones would learn little or nothing of his students' progress. And in other places, he might receive some reports, but they would be spotty and lacking in detail. Without good information, Art would find it difficult to analyze the overall performance of his students and refine the content of his courses or his teaching strategy.

Every college and university should tell high schools and teachers like Art Jones just how well their graduates are prepared to handle college-level work and how they performed during the freshman year. Good information makes it possible for schools to make changes that can increase the number of graduates ready for college. Such actions by colleges and schools could eventually eliminate the need for colleges to offer remedial programs.

Reports on how well students do in introductory college courses:

- Can help teachers and principals as they assess the high school's college preparatory curricula.
- Can be used jointly by college faculty and their high school colleagues to align high school and college courses in the same disciplines.
- Can encourage high schools and colleges to work together to design courses and other activities that help reduce the number of college freshmen who need remedial work.
- Can enable policymakers, chief state school officers, local superintendents, and higher education officials to monitor the results of changes in admissions and placement policies and in high school coursework.

College readiness reporting systems are an important part of meeting the goal to increase the number of high school graduates

who are ready to begin college-level work. To reach this goal, states must:

- Define what students need to know and be able to do before taking college-level courses;
- Agree on what a college preparatory curriculum should be;
- Encourage high school and college instructors in the same academic disciplines to work jointly to develop teaching and learning strategies that help students get ready for college work.

In the 1980s, state policymakers became concerned about the high rate of students entering college who needed remedial help in writing, reading, and mathematics. More recently, a national survey found that about one of every three freshmen who entered college in 1989 needed some remedial work. These developments raise several questions:

- What is college-level study?
- How well are our high school graduates prepared for it?
- How can students be better prepared for college work?
- What percent of high school graduates complete their freshman year successfully? How many return for the second year of college?

In response to these kinds of questions, many states have implemented policies designed to improve preparation for college. For example, states have:

- Increased the number of units required to graduate from high school;
- Adopted admission policies that specify a minimum number of high school courses which must be completed to be considered for admission;
- Called for cooperative efforts among schools and colleges to increase the number of students taking college preparatory courses;
- Promoted "academic alliances" among local colleges and high schools that bring together faculty in the same academic disciplines to exchange ideas on curriculum and teaching strategies;
- Re-examined freshman and sophomore year coursework to more clearly define what is meant by "college-level" study;
- Adopted common measures that all institutions use to assess student readiness for college.

These kinds of state initiatives are well-intentioned, and some may be producing positive results. But it is often difficult to assess how well the initiatives are working because many colleges and schools do not exchange information on how high school graduates perform once they reach college. The lack of information also makes it difficult or impossible to measure progress toward the SREB goal that by the year 2000, *four of every five students entering college will be ready to begin college-level work.*

THE STATUS OF COLLEGE-TO-SCHOOL REPORTING SYSTEMS IN SREB STATES

Reporting to high schools on students' success in college is relatively straightforward, and many individual institutions have done it for years. The frequency and quality of the reporting varies greatly from institution to institution.

Many colleges and universities publish a profile of each entering class. The profiles typically include the number of applicants, how many were admitted, and how many actually enrolled. Within these categories, students are grouped by high school grades, by class rank, and by scores on college admissions tests. This information can be useful to high school counselors in guiding students to colleges where they would have the best chances for admission. But the profiles fall short of giving students, individual schools, school districts, and states the kind of information that can be used to help get students ready for college.

At the end of the freshman year, many colleges provide high schools with individual transcripts of their former students. The problem with this approach is that someone in the high school has to assemble the different transcripts, analyze each one to determine grades in different subjects, and then compile a report. Unless the reports for each school are combined to produce district- and state-level reports, there is no way of knowing if students from one high school are performing as well as students from another.

More recent state- or district-level reports from colleges to schools improve on older methods. The new systems consolidate information about how each school and school district's graduates performed at different colleges and universities. The degree to which such reports contribute to better prepared students depends upon the kind of information and amount of detail contained in the reports, and how the information is used.

In 1988, eight SREB states (Louisiana, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, Florida, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas) had developed–or were developing–systems for reporting to high schools on students' readiness for college.

Since 1988, both Arkansas and Kentucky have implemented reporting systems. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education has begun collecting information and reporting it to the State Department of Education's Office of Accountability. West Virginia and Virginia are in the process of developing reporting programs. Among the 15 SREB states, only Alabama and Mississippi have not yet instigated statewide reporting procedures (see Table 1).

SREB states differ in the way they gather and report information, the kind of information they report, and the amount of detail in the reports. Some states coordinate the process through agencies at the state level; other states rely on individual colleges and universities to report directly to high schools or school districts.

In Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Maryland, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Texas, information from institutions is collected at the state level and summary reports are produced for the state, the school districts, and individual schools. Higher education institutions in South Carolina and the state universities and community colleges in Florida send individual student transcripts to high schools. Florida is developing a common format for summary reports from two-year and four-year institutions to schools. South Carolina is considering development of a more comprehensive reporting system.

Table 1
COLLEGE-READINESS REPORTING PROGRAMS SREB STATES, 1992

SREB States	Institutions Involved	Type of Reporting
Alabama	–	–
Arkansas	All Public Colleges/Universities	Placement
Florida	All Public Colleges/Universities	Placement and Performance
Georgia	All Public Colleges/Universities	Placement and Performance
Kentucky	All Public Colleges/Universities	Placement and Performance
Louisiana	All Public Colleges/Universities	Placement and Performance
Maryland	State Universities and Colleges	Performance
Mississippi	–	–
North Carolina		
University of North Carolina	All Public Four-Year Colleges/Universities	Placement and Performance
Department of Community Colleges*	All Public Two-Year Colleges	Placement and Performance
Oklahoma*	–	–
South Carolina	All Colleges/Universities	Performance
Tennessee		
Board of Regents	University/Community College System	Placement
University of Tennessee	University of Tennessee	Placement and Performance
Texas	All Public Colleges/Universities	Placement and Performance
Virginia*	All Public Colleges/Universities	–
West Virginia*	All Public Colleges/Universities	Placement and Performance

SOURCE: 1992 SREB Benchmarks survey of state departments of education.
* Programs are under development.
– Did not report.

While states vary in the kinds of information they report, their reports do have some elements in common, including: college course placement and performance data (for example, the number and percentage of students from a high school or school district placed into remedial English and math versus college-level English and math); the mean grade point average for freshmen; and the percentages of students passing remedial or college-level courses.

In a recent survey, state departments of education told SREB that state-level reports about the academic progress of recent high school graduates are being used to monitor:

- The effectiveness of schools and districts in preparing students for college (eight states);
- Success of high school graduates in the freshman year of college (seven states);
- The percentage of high school graduates who need to take remedial coursework in college (seven states);
- The percentage of students who meet admissions requirements to public colleges and universities (four states);
- College attendance rates (four states).

EXAMPLES OF REPORTING SYSTEMS

Three examples will illustrate the differences both in the kinds of information provided in college-to-school reports and in the way states and institutions report information. Programs in Tennessee, North Carolina, and Louisiana all provide information about the college success of recent high school graduates. The Tennessee program is administered by the Tennessee Board of Regents, and the North Carolina program operates through the UNC System. In Louisiana, the State Superintendent of Education assembles the state-level reports.

Tennessee

The Tennessee Board of Regents report includes information about freshmen under 21 who enter one of six comprehensive universities or 14 community colleges governed by the Board of Regents.

Higher education and secondary schools in Tennessee consider a student "academically prepared" for college when the student has achieved competency in the basic academic skills named in The College Board's Project EQuality–a report reflecting broad national concensus about what a student entering college should know and be able to do. Tennessee's Comprehensive Educational Reform Act of 1984 directs that these skills be taught in high school.

To be admitted to a Regents institution, Tennessee students must have completed 13 high school units in specific subjects named in Project EQuality.[1] To determine whether students are competent in English, reading comprehension, and mathematics, the Board of Regents uses the *Academic Assessment and Placement Program* or "AAPP" test. The test is administered to entering students who score below a required level on the American College Test, more commonly known as the ACT.

To help high schools improve student preparation for college, two reports were developed to provide information about graduates who are first-time freshmen in

[1] High school units required for regular admission to Regent' university degree programs are: English, 4 units; Algebra I and II, 2 units; Geometry or other advanced math course with geometry as major component, 1 unit; Natural/Physical Sciences including at least one unit with lab, 2 units; Social Studies, 1 unit, United States History, 1 unit; one Foreign Language, 2 units. One unit in Visual or Performing Arts will be required with the class entering in fall 1993.

Regents institutions–The Admissions Requirements Report and The AAPP Feedback Report.

The Admissions Requirements Report indicates the number of first-time freshmen under 21 years of age who lack one or more of the high school courses generally required for admission and lists the courses they are missing (see Sample 1).

The Feedback Report includes detailed information about first-time freshmen under 21 years of age who enroll in remedial or developmental courses. Students are listed by their high school and by the college or university they attend. Each high school receives a report that shows the number and the percent of its graduates who were placed in remedial courses at each Regents institution. In addition, the high school receives a comprehensive profile for students at all Regents institutions. Each institution also receives a report showing the students placed in remedial courses at the institution, by high school.

Summary reports present the number and the percent of freshmen in various remedial courses, as well as the scores by test area for students who take the placement test (see Sample 2). Finally, each high school receives a listing, by social security number, of its graduates who take the placement test and the scores earned by test area.

The reports generated by the Regents system are useful because they include enough detail to help schools and colleges make judgments about the quality of college preparation. The summary reports–which provide the numbers and percentages of students meeting admissions requirements, scoring at different intervals on the placement test, and being placed in remedial courses–can be used by the state and by individual school districts to monitor the effectiveness of high school programs. The information also allows each high school to compare its graduates who attend these institutions with graduates from other high schools, other school districts, and from the state as a whole.

The individual student information lets each high school take a deeper look at each student's performance on the placement test, and to see where the student was placed in the college or university. This information can be compared with the student's high school coursework and grades.

The school can use the summary data and the individual student data to help plan changes in courses and teaching strategies and to track results over time. They can also be used to advise current high school students about what they need to do to better prepare for college.

A successful school-college collaborative between Walters State Community College and the Greene County school system demonstrates the usefulness of the Regents college-to-school reports. Mathematics and English teachers in Greene County and at Walters State use the reports to review and assess the effects of their joint efforts to upgrade courses in their disciplines.

When the reports are received, faculty and teachers meet to talk about what happened to Greene County high school graduates who applied for admission to Regents institutions and took the placement test. The reports reveal information about the specific weaknesses of these students. For example, teachers can tell if students who were placed in remedial mathematics needed more preparation in arithmetic skills, operations with real numbers, operations with algebraic expressions, and the solutions of equations and inequalities.

By working together, the college and high school teachers design instructional strategies and modify the content of mathematics courses to help students overcome these weaknesses while in high school.

Sample 1

TENNESSEE BOARD OF REGENTS: ANALYSIS OF FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN UNDER 21 WHO ARE DEFICIENT IN ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Each high school receives reports similar to this statewide summary. One report shows how many of the school's graduates had course deficiencies, by each Regents institution attended; a summary report shows the information for the school's graduates across the system.

Number of First-Time Freshmen	12,124
Deficiency: By Unit	
Number with 0 Deficiencies	9,359
Percent with 0 Deficiencies	77.2%
Number with 1 Deficiency	1,600
Percent with 1 Deficiency	13.2%
Number with 2 Deficiencies	497
Percent with 2 Deficiencies	4.1%
Number with 3 or More Deficiencies	668
Percent with 3 or More Deficiencies	5.5%
Deficiency: By Subject Area	
Number Deficient in English	65
Percent Deficient in English	0.5%
Number Deficient in Algebra I	198
Percent Deficient in Algebra I	1.6%
Number Deficient in Algebra II	1,129
Percent Deficient in Algebra II	9.3%
Number Deficient in Geometry/Advanced Mathematics	809
Percent Deficient in Geometry/Advanced Mathematics	6.7%
Number Deficient in One Unit of Natural/Physical Sciences	119
Percent Deficient in One Unit of Natural/Physical Sciences	1%
Number Deficient in Two Units of Natural/Physical Sciences	4
Percent Deficient in Two Units of Natural/Physical Sciences	—
Number Deficient in Social Studies	220
Percent Deficient in Social Studies	1.8%
Number Deficient in United States History	19
Percent Deficient in United States History	0.2%
Number Deficient in Foreign Language I	413
Percent Deficient in Foreign Language I	3.4%
Number Deficient in Visual and/or Performing Arts	1,418
Percent Deficient in Visual and/or Performing Arts	11.7%

Sample 2
INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL REPORT SHOWING HOW FIRST-TIME FRESHMAN PERFORMED ON THE TENNESSEE BOARD OF REGENTS PLACEMENT EXAMINATION

Each high school in Tennessee receives reports similar to this for its graduates who attend Regents institutions.

SAMPLE VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL			Percentage of	
AAPP Test and Number of Questions	Number of Students from School	Average Number of Correct Answers	Questions Answered Correctly by Students from This School	Questions Answered Correctly by Students from All Schools
Reading Comprehension:				
Total Score (45)	56	26.5	58.9	57.3
Identifying Word and/or Phrase Meaning through Context (11)		7.4	67.3	65.5
Understanding Literature and Interpretive Meaning (19)		11.0	57.9	57.4
Understanding Writers' Assumptions, Opinions and Tone (15)		8.1	54.0	51.3
Writing:				
Total Score (6)	66	3.2	53.3	51.7
Arithmetic Skills:				
Total Score (35)	16	22.8	65.1	62.9
Operations with Whole Numbers (7)		6.4	91.4	91.4
Operations with Fractions and Decimal (14)		9.5	67.9	63.6
Ratio, Proportion, and Percent (7)		3.4	48.6	50.0
Applications (7)		3.4	48.6	45.7
Elementary Algebra:				
Total Score (35)	28	14.2	40.6	40.9
Operations with Real Numbers (9)		4.3	47.8	47.8
Operations with Algebraic Expressions (17)		6.8	40.0	40.0
Solutions of Equations and Inequalities (9)		3.1	34.4	34.4
Intermediate Algebra:				
Total Score (30)	26	15.0	50.0	46.0
Algebraic Operations (10)		5.9	59.0	52.0
Solution of Equations and Inequalities (11)		5.7	51.8	47.3
Geometry (9)		3.4	37.8	37.8

The principal of a Greene County high school says the close collaboration between teachers and college faculty has paid off in improved performance on the American College Test, better college-going rates, and more enthusiasm about high school courses.

School counselors use the information to demonstrate to students the importance of taking challenging high school courses. Faculty at Walters State better understand the needs of students from the local high schools, and they can design developmental courses that focus on specific areas of underpreparation. High school and middle school teachers are now talking together about how to improve math and English curricula at the middle school level–indicating the ripple effect of a good feedback system.

The reports by the Regents provide "snapshots" of the readiness of graduates for college that can help schools answer these questions:

- Do some students who complete the required mathematics courses need remedial mathematics when they enroll in college?
- Does the mathematics curriculum, for example, need to be reviewed to determine if the basic academic competencies are being taught?
- What are the average scores for students from your high school who enter the Regents system? What are the average scores by individual institutions?
- What changes have occurred in the level of student preparation at a specific high school over the last five years?

The Board of Regents has developed a *Users' Guide* for the detailed reports, and the Board routinely conducts workshops throughout the state to help high school teachers, counselors, and college faculty use the information.

The Tennessee Board of Regents reporting system is perhaps the most comprehensive currently in operation in the region. However, it only provides information about Tennessee high school graduates who attend Regents institutions. The University of Tennessee, which governs four other state institutions, provides some information on the performance of Tennessee high school graduates, but its reports are not nearly as comprehensive.

North Carolina

The General Administration of the University of North Carolina originally developed a college-to-school report when it established minimum course requirements for admissions. Initially, the university system reported the number of applicants at each of its 16 campuses who met or failed to meet admissions requirements.

Later, in response to legislative requirements, UNC officials worked with school superintendents and the State Department of Public Instruction to determine the information about student performance that would be most useful to schools and school systems. The first admissions status reports from this cooperative effort were generated in 1992. High school graduates who attend University of North Carolina institutions are included; students in the North Carolina community college system are not.

For each high school and school district, the University of North Carolina system provides a profile of high school graduates who enrolled as first-time freshmen at one of the 16 institutions in the University of North Carolina system. The profile reports on 53 indicators that fall under four broad categories: academic status of the students at the beginning of their second year in college; initial course placement (remedial, regular, or advanced) in English and mathematics;

Sample 3
THE NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL REPORT:
A FOLLOW-UP OF GRADUATES WHO ENROLLED
AS FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN AT UNC INSTITUTIONS

Each school in North Carolina receives a report similar to this statewide summary. The report shows how their students performed at each University of North Carolina institution and how their students performed across the system as a whole.

	Category	Performance Measures	UNC Total
A	Academic Status Summary (Fall 1990 Freshmen)	Total Number of Freshmen	19,188
		Percent with GPA >= 2.0	72.7
		Percent with GPA >= 3.0	25.1
		Percent Returned for 2nd Semester, Year 1	94.5
		Percent Returned for Year 2	82.7
		Percent Returned for Year 2 with GPA >= 2.0	65.4
		Percent Returned for Year 2 with GPA >= 2 and Credit Hours >= 30	31.1
B	Initial Course Placement Recommendations and Initial Course Performance (Fall 1990 Freshmen)	Percent with Advanced Placement in English	14.6
		Percent in Regular Freshman English	79.0
		Percent in Remedial English	6.3
		Percent in Calculus or above	28.6
		Percent in College Algebra	47.2
		Percent in Other Mathematics	9.5
		Percent in Remedial Mathematics	14.6
		Percent in Honors Program	5.3
		Percent with >= 1 Remedial Course	18.7
		Average Grade in Advanced English	3.0
		Average Grade in Regular English	2.7
		Average Grade in Remedial English	2.7
		Average Grade in Calculus or above	2.6
		Average Grade in College Algebra	2.1
		Average Grade in Other Mathematics	2.4
		Average Grade in Remedial Mathematics	2.3
C	Course Performance Measures in College-Level Courses (Summer 1990 through Spring 1991 Coursework)	English Courses	
		Average Credit Hours in Subject	5.1
		Average Course Grade	2.7
		Percent of Course Grades >= C	91.4
		Mathematics Courses	
		Average Credit Hours in Subject	4.4
		Average Course Grade	2.2
		Percent of Course Grades = >C	69.8
		(The full report includes the same information for Foreign Language, Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences, and Social Sciences.)	
		All Courses	
		Average Credit Hours	29.6
		Average Course Grade	2.5
		Percent of Course Grades >= C	80.1
D	High School Achievement	Average Class Rank	76
		Average Verbal SAT	448
		Average Mathematics SAT	501

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how students performed in courses during the freshman year; and information on high school achievement (see Sample 3).

The North Carolina system does not report individual student data to high schools but does provide information about groups of students who attend each of the UNC institutions. High school principals and faculty can use this information (for example, the percentage of students in remedial, regular, and advanced English and mathematics and the average course grade) to ask questions about the school's college preparatory curriculum.

Of particular significance in the North Carolina report is its inclusion of information about the number and percentage of a high school's graduates who return for their sophomore year. When viewed in the context of the other data provided (average grades, placement information, etc.), this "survival" information can reveal the need for schools and colleges to ask other questions about students' readiness. It can prompt a college to examine how well it is responding to students' non-academic needs. For example, suppose one finds that 90 percent of a high school's graduates make better than a "C" average in the freshman year, but only 50 percent return for the sophomore year. What does this mean for the high school? For the college?

Information from the UNC admissions status report is already used by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction in the high school accreditation process. To maintain accreditation, a certain percentage of a high school's graduates must complete the minimum course requirements for admission to the University of North Carolina.

Louisiana

The Lousiana State Superintendent of Education compiles parish-level and state-level data collected by the State Board of Regents and reports the results to the legis-

Sample 4
LOUISIANA PERFORMANCE REPORT: STATEWIDE HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Year	Institution Type	Developmental Students		Developmental Mathematics Students		Developmental English Students		Developmental Reading Students	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1987	Public	8,688	54.45	1,185	45.03	4,171	26.14	3,343	20.95
	Non-Public	2,459	46.80	2,100	39.97	786	14.96	554	10.54
	Combined	11,147	52.55	9,285	43.77	4,957	23.37	3,897	18.37
1988	Public	8,223	50.50	6,585	40.44	3,867	23.75	2,837	17.42
	Non-Public	2,358	42.35	2,043	36.69	745	13.38	394	7.08
	Combined	10,581	48.43	8,628	39.49	4,612	21.11	3,231	14.79
1989	Public	6,383	51.06	5,386	43.08	2,759	22.07	2,117	16.93
	Non-Public	1,987	48.65	1,702	41.67	688	16.85	407	9.97
	Combined	8,370	50.46	7,088	42.73	3,447	20.78	2,524	15.22

lature and to the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Reports are produced on the performance of high school graduates within the state who enrolled in Louisiana state colleges and universities. The Louisiana College and University Student Performance Report includes:

- The number of high school diplomas issued each year;
- The number and proportion of high school graduates who entered state colleges and universities as first-time freshmen in the fall term;
- The number and proportion of high school graduates required to enroll for remedial courses by subject areas; and
- The number and proportion of high school graduates who completed their first term "in good standing" (were neither suspended nor placed on academic probation).

The information is reported at the state and local school system levels for public high school graduates, non-public high school graduates, and for all graduates.

Louisiana's report demonstrates how college-to-school reporting can be used to monitor progress toward educational goals and outcomes over time. The reporting system includes a three-year summary on each of the performance measures. This longitudinal report tells Louisiana, for example, that the proportion of entering freshmen who must enroll for remedial coursework in English and reading has declined over time, but there has been little change in the proportion of freshmen who must enroll in remedial mathematics.

The report also reveals that the percentages of both developmental and non-developmental students completing the first term "in good standing" is increasing. School systems can analyze their data to determine if their graduates are following these state trends (see Sample 4).

SUMMARY

College-to-school reports on the academic skills of entering college students and their academic performance as freshmen can help states review and monitor progress on how well high schools are preparing students for college work. Good reporting systems can also provide school and college faculty with the information they need to work individually and in collaborative situations to improve instruction and coordinate high school and college curricula.

While many individual institutions tell high schools what grades their graduates earn during their first semester in college, the information is sometimes incomplete and is not always summarized in a way that is useful to teachers, school administrators, or state-level policymakers. By generating local school, school district, and state-level summaries, the information becomes more meaningful, more useful, and more timely. Schools receive the data from all institutions at the same time.

This comprehensive format allows school staff to spend time analyzing the information rather than gathering data. When individual student information is included, schools can examine the courses that students took in high school, the grades they earned, and learn whether their students were ready to do college work.

College-to-school reports are being refined to provide more useful and timely information in most SREB states. Regardless of what kind of system is implemented, the information will be most useful to classroom teachers, guidance counselors, and curriculum directors when it includes the kind of detail that can help improve course content and teaching. (For example, grades in specific freshman English courses are more meaningful to high school English teachers than an overall grade point average.) At the same time, the information needs to be summarized in a way that will make it useful to policymakers as they monitor progress toward education goals.

Policies and programs that tell students, parents, and school counselors about what will be required to be successful in college are clearly needed. A successful college readiness reporting program involves:

- Cooperation of state and local educators in planning, implementation, and evaluation;
- State-level coordination of the reporting process;
- A common reporting format that provides both detailed and summary information;
- A reporting schedule that allows high schools to receive the information about their graduates from all colleges within a concise time period;
- An assessment program to determine the skills of students entering college;
- Grouping of students by age or high school graduation date and the courses they completed in high school;
- Assistance to high schools in interpreting and using the information provided;
- Bringing high school and college faculty together to review college-readiness results and decide what actions the information suggests.

In 1988, college-to-school reporting was characterized as "an idea whose time has come." In 1992, the idea is maturing.